

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Brooke Cheney and I am from Harwinton. I am the mother of a 6 and 7 year old. I come before you today to simply state that, "one size never fits all". I oppose common core and hope that you will learn enough today to oppose it as well.

Having done some research it appears to me that successful schools have one thing in common, community support. Communities are different all over Connecticut and so are our children. I have a boy and a girl. Both of my kids are bright, but in no way do they learn or become engaged in the same ways. If you ask them to solve a problem, they both will solve it, but it won't necessarily be the same way. On a standardized test this would make one of them right and one of them wrong even though they both came up with a solution.

I believe if one has a problem that you need to be part of the solution. There are many successful programs out there. Below are just a few for ideas on what to do to raise the education and employability of the next generation.

2013 Study - How School Climate Distinguishes Schools That Are Beating the Achievement Odds by California Comprehensive Center, a partnership of WestEd and the American Institutes for Research, and part of the federal network of 15 Regional

The goal of this study is to determine what makes successful schools different from other schools. Rather than define success in absolute terms—such as the percentage of students who are proficient on a standardized test—this study's definition is based on whether or not a school is performing better than predicted given the characteristics of the students it serves.

... The measure includes such dimensions of the school environment as safety, academic supports, social relationships, and school connectedness. A positive school climate has been associated with higher academic achievement and healthy behavioral outcomes for students.

- This article can be found at http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/hd-13-10.pdf

2006 Study - Successful Schools: From Research to Action Plans from the International Center for Leadership in Education.

... though the meta-analysis research was valuable and appreciated, their most urgent need was a series of specific characteristics they could readily adopt that would help their schools in the short term.

Characteristics of Successful Schools - 1. Focus instruction around students' interests, learning styles, and aptitudes through a variety of small learning community approaches—most commonly academies.

2. Administrators and teachers share an unrelenting commitment to excellence for all students, especially in the area of literacy.

3. An extraordinary commitment of resources and attention to ninth grade students.

4. A rigorous and relevant twelfth grade year.

5. A laser-like focus on data at the classroom level to make daily instructional decisions for individual students.

6. High-quality curriculum and instruction that focuses on rigor and relevance.

7. Provide students with adults with whom they can develop personal relationships and be allowed the opportunity to use reflective thought.

8. Focus and maintain professional development around a limited number of high-impact initiatives.
9. Solid and dedicated leadership.

.. it is abundantly clear that schools understand and embrace the research and are gaining a clearer understanding of characteristics that high-performing schools possess. Schools now seek direction and support in developing specific action plans to implement these characteristics.

For More info on this report <http://www.leadered.com/pdf/Successful%20Schools%206-05.pdf>

ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG POOR AND MINORITY STUDENTS

An Analysis of Competing Models of School Effects

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/techReports/Report52.pdf>

Research: How SEL Classroom Management Techniques Build Academic Success

By Vanessa Vega and Youki Terada

Mount Desert Elementary School is a small, K-8 public school in Northeast Harbor, Maine, that has successfully created a strong learning community that is the basis of the school's academic success. Since 2006, this elementary school has consistently outperformed the state of Maine in the percentage of students at "Proficient with Distinction" or above on state tests, and has been awarded National Blue Ribbon Schools Program status for academic excellence in 2008. While the teachers and principal of Mount Desert are hesitant to attribute their school's success to any particular recipe or approach, several key practices seem crucial to the school's success:

- Responsive Classroom
- Tailoring instruction to student's learning needs and interests
- A community-based learning atmosphere

Find More at <http://www.edutopia.org/schools-that-work>

Thank you for your time

Brooke Cheney

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